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PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Stephen J. Garske

Examiner: Mark Graham

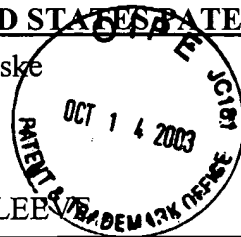
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APPEAL BRIEF TO THE BOARD OF
PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES OF THE
UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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Appellant's Brief on Appeal

This brief is presented in support of the Notice of Appeal filed on May 9, 2003, from the second rejection of claims 1, 3, 8, 9, 11-13, 20, and 22-30 of the pending claims 1-3, 8, 9, 11-14, 20, and 22-30 of the above identified application. The Office Action which Appellant hereby appeals was mailed March 5, 2003.

The Appeal Brief is filed in triplicate. Please charge the requisite fee set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(c) to Deposit Account 19-0743. Appellant respectfully requests reversal of the Examiner's rejection of claims 1, 3, 8, 9, 11-13, 20, and 22-30.

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Real Party in Interest

The present application has been assigned to Par Aide Products Co., a corporation organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Minnesota, and having an office and place of business at 6800 Otter Lake Rd, Lino Lakes, MN 55038, in an assignment recorded on August 6, 1999, (Reel/Frame 10158/500-502).

Related Appeals and Interferences

There are no other appeals or interferences known to Appellant which will have a bearing on the Board's decision in the present appeal.

Status of the Claims

The present application was filed as a continuation application of Patent Application No. 09/369,529 (now U.S. Pat. No. 6,409,608), and was filed with claims 1-30. Claims 4-7, 10, 15-19, and 21 were cancelled by preliminary amendment. No claims have been added. Claims 1-3, 8, 9, 11-14, 20, and 22-30 are pending in this application. Claims 2 and 14 have been withdrawn. The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3, 8, 9, 11-13, 20, and 22-30. The rejected claims are the subject of the present appeal.

Status of the Amendments

No amendments have been submitted subsequent to the Office Action mailed March 5, 2003. The pending claims listed in Appendix A reflect the current claims 1, 3, 8, 9, 11-13, 20, and 22-30.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention relates to a golf cup sleeve to protect the interior surface of a golf cup. In one embodiment of the invention, the golf cup apparatus (See Figs. 1 and 4) includes a golf cup 430 comprising a cylinder extending from a top surface 432 to a bottom surface 434, the

golf cup including a wall extending between the top surface and the bottom surface, the cup wall defined by an interior surface 438 and an exterior surface 439. The apparatus also includes a cup sleeve (410 in Fig. 4, 100 in Fig. 1) disposed within the golf cup, the sleeve comprising a one-piece, seamless cylinder having an open circular top end and an open circular bottom end and the cup sleeve abutting the interior surface 438 of the golf cup without interfering with a golf ball dropping within the golf cup. In some embodiments, sleeve 100 can include a notch 112 (Fig. 1C).

In one embodiment of the invention, the golf cup apparatus includes a metal golf cup 430 comprising a cylinder extending from a top surface 432 to a bottom surface 434, the bottom surface including flag retention features therein, the metal golf cup defined by an interior surface 438 and an exterior surface 439, the metal golf cup including sleeve retention features, the sleeve retention features including an annular lip 431 disposed on the interior surface. The apparatus also includes a cup sleeve (410 and 100) disposed within the metal golf cup, the sleeve comprising a one-piece, seamless plastic cylinder defined in outer surface by an outer surface; the plastic cylinder disposed within the metal cup such that the outer surface of the plastic cylinder rests against the interior surface 438 of the metal golf cup in an interference fit therebetween and a top edge surface 402 of the sleeve abuts a bottom surface of the annular lip 431.

In one embodiment of the invention, a golf cup sleeve includes a cylindrical sleeve 100 (Fig. 1) having an outer diameter dimensioned to fit against an inner surface 438 of a golf cup 430 and an inner diameter dimensioned so as not to interfere with a golf ball dropping within the golf cup, the cylindrical sleeve having a one-piece, seamless form wherein the cylindrical sleeve presents a substantially smooth inner surface when the cylindrical sleeve is mounted within the golf cup (See Fig. 4).

One embodiment of the present invention includes a method of method of inserting a golf cup sleeve into a golf cup. The method includes placing a one-piece, seamless cylindrical golf cup sleeve (100, 410) into a golf cup 430; and releasing the golf cup sleeve so that an outer surface of the golf cup sleeve is forced against an inner surface 438 of the golf cup and an inner surface of the golf cup sleeve does not interfere with a golf ball dropping within the golf cup.

Issues Presented for Review

Whether claims 1, 9, 11, 12, 22, 25, 27, and 29 were properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Boyd (UK Patent Application GB 2206804)[hereinafter Boyd] in view of Browne (US 5,382,018) [hereinafter Browne]?

Whether claims 3, 13, 20, 23, 26, and 30 were properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Boyd in view of Browne, and further in view of Hageman (US 5,362,044) [hereinafter Hageman]?

Whether 8, 24, and 28 were properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Crocker in view of Browne?

Grouping of the Claims

Claims 1, 3, 9, 11, 12, and 13 are grouped together for purposes of this appeal. Claims 22 and 23 are grouped together for purposes of this appeal. Claims 25-27 are grouped together for purposes of this appeal. Claims 29-30 are grouped together for purposes of this appeal. Each of the remaining claims, 8, 20, 24, and 28, stands alone for purposes of this appeal. The claims will be discussed in sections corresponding to the Examiner's rejections.

Argument

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

1) The Applicable Law

The Examiner has the burden under 35 U.S.C. § 103 to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 1074, 5 USPQ2d 1596, 1598 (Fed. Cir. 1988). To do that the Examiner must show that some objective teaching in the prior art or some knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art would lead an individual to combine the relevant teaching of the references. *Id.*

The court in *Fine* stated that:

Obviousness is tested by “what the combined teaching of the references would have suggested to those of ordinary skill in the art.” *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 425, 208 USPQ 871, 878 (CCPA 1981)). But it “cannot be established by combining the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching or suggestion supporting the combination.” *ACS Hosp. Sys.*, 732 F.2d at 1577, 221 USPQ at 933. And “teachings of references can be combined *only* if there is some suggestion or incentive to do so.”

Id. (emphasis in original).

The M.P.E.P. adopts this line of reasoning, stating that

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, and not based on Appellant’s disclosure.

M.P.E.P. § 2142 (citing *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991)).

The test for obviousness under § 103 must take into consideration the invention as a whole; that is, one must consider the particular problem solved by the combination of elements that define the invention. *Interconnect Planning Corp. v. Feil*, 774 F.2d 1132, 1143, 227 USPQ 543, 551 (Fed. Cir. 1985). Furthermore, claims must be interpreted in light of the specification, claim language, other claims and prosecution history. *Panduit Corp. v. Dennison Mfg. Co.*, 810 F.2d 1561, 1568, 1 USPQ2d 1593, 1597 (Fed. Cir. 1987), *cert. denied*, 481 U.S. 1052 (1987). At the same time, a prior patent cited as a § 103 reference must be considered in its entirety, “*i.e.* as a *whole*, including portions that lead away from the invention.” *Id.* That is, the Examiner must, as one of the inquiries pertinent to any obviousness inquiry under 35 U.S.C. § 103, recognize and consider not only the similarities but also the critical differences between the claimed invention and the prior art. *In re Bond*, 910 F.2d 831, 834, 15 USPQ2d 1566, 1568 (Fed. Cir. 1990), *reh'g*

denied, 1990 U.S. App. LEXIS 19971 (Fed. Cir. 1990). Finally, the Examiner must avoid hindsight. *Id.*

A factor cutting against a finding of motivation to combine or modify the prior art is when the prior art teaches away from the claimed combination. A reference may be said to teach away when a person of ordinary skill, upon reading the reference, would be discouraged from following the path set out in the reference, or would be led in a direction divergent from the path the applicant took. *In re Gurley*, 27 F.3d 551, 31 USPQ 2d 1130, 1131 (Fed. Cir. 1994); *United States v. Adams*, 383 U.S. 39, 52, 148 USPQ 479, 484 (1966); *In re Sponnoble*, 405 F.2d 578, 587, 160 USPQ 237, 244 (C.C.P.A. 1969); *In re Caldwell*, 319 F.2d 254, 256, 138 USPQ 243, 245 (C.C.P.A. 1963). Moreover, if a proposed modification would render the prior art invention being modified unsatisfactory for its intended purpose, then there is no suggestion or motivation to make the proposed modification. *In re Gordon*, 733 F.2d 900, 221 USPQ 1125 (Fed. Cir. 1984); MPEP § 2143.01.

2) Discussion of the Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 9, 11, 12, 20, 22, 25, 27, and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Boyd in view of Browne; and claims 3, 13, 20, 23, 26, and 30 as being unpatentable over Boyd in view of Browne, and further in view of Hageman.

Appellant submits that the Examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness since there is no suggestion to combine the reference teachings either in the references themselves or in the knowledge available to one of ordinary skill in the art. In addition, even if combined, the combined teachings of the present references would not lead to the present invention.

The Boyd reference discusses a liner for a golf cup. The liner is a strip of flexible, resilient material (Fig. 1, Boyd). The strip can be bent into a cylindrical member for use. (Fig. 2, Boyd). When folded, the transverse edges 12, 13 of the liner meet, leaving a seam. The recited purpose of the Boyd device is to mitigate the required maintenance necessary to keep the interior of golf cups clean and white. (Page 1, lines 13-16 of Boyd).

The Browne reference discusses a putting hole collar. Referring to Figs 3 and 4 of Browne, the collar 10 is installed in the cup 12 above a liner 14 but below a lip 20 of the hole 18. The collar 10 is a flexible, brightly colored cylinder. The collar 10 is installed in a position around the top side of the golf hole adjacent to exposed earth wall 30. The collar is installed by partially collapsing one side of the collar to reduce the overall diameter (Fig. 4), then returning the deflected side to its normal state once positioned in the hole. Among the recited objects of the Browne device is to “provide a golf hole collar which in normal use provides high visibility” (col. 2, lines 35-37), and which “assists in holding the shape of the hole.” (col. 2, lines 58-59). Browne states that his collar also “enhances the retention of moisture in the earth around the lip to prevent drying and crumbling of the soil.” (col. 3, lines 22-24).

The Examiner asserts that it would be obvious to combine these references since “[i]n view of Browne the use of a one-piece seamless design in fashioning Boyd’s liner would have been obvious to the ordinarily skilled artisan wishing to make Boyd’s device easier to insert into the hole.” (Page 2 of 3/5/2003 Office Action).

Appellant submits that the Examiner is using an unsupported, hind-sight rationale and that there is no suggestion or motivation to combine the cited references. Notwithstanding the difference of opinion between the Appellant and the Examiner on this rejection, the Appellant would like to thank the Examiner for his clearly earnest consideration of previously submitted arguments. It is hoped that this brief will more clearly explain the Appellant’s arguments and persuade the Examiner more convincingly than the Appellant’s previous attempts.

The Appellant would like to first point out a clear error in the Examiner’s reasoning on this rejection. More specifically, the Examiner has cited a motivation for combining the references which simply does not exist either in reality or in theory. That alleged motivation is that a skilled artisan would see that it would be “easier to insert” the seamless cylinder of Browne into a golf cup than a seamed liner. The known facts of record in this case do not support that purported motivation. Neither the Appellant nor the cited art supports the notion that a seamed sleeve liner of the type used by Boyd is difficult to get in and out of a cup. In fact, one can argue that the opposite is true. With the seamed liner, a golf course worker can just as easily insert the

liner in the cup as a seamed liner. The seamed liner can be collapsed as easily as a seamless one, and popped into place just as easily. Moreover, the seamed liner is more easily removed, for example by using a knife or other bladed tool to separate the opposing and abutting edges of the liner. This is certainly no more difficult, and in fact arguably much easier, than trying to remove a seamless liner that is, in a preferred embodiment, tucked tightly on its top edge under a lip on the cup. As such, it is far from readily apparent, much less obvious, that a skilled artisan would be motivated to use a seamless cylinder design in order to accomplish the goal propounded by the Examiner to support his position.

More importantly, in point of fact the advantage of using a seamless liner is not to make it easier to insert or remove the liner from the golf cup. As recognized by the Appellant and the Appellant only, the advantage of the seamless liner is that the edges of the seamed liner do not collect dirt or grit behind them or otherwise warp so that the edges of the liner flay or dog ear away from tight engagement with the cup wall. This results in the golf ball potentially catching the top edge of the liner or an edge of the vertical seam and being bounced out of the cup. This, of course, is a minor “disaster” when it occurs during a serious or even not so serious golf match or round.

Accordingly, the Appellant would like to respectfully suggest that this rejection is premised on a mischaracterization or misconstruing of the problems in the art and therefore should not be sustained.

Furthermore, the purpose and use and design requirements of the liner of Browne are qualitatively different from those of Boyd. In Browne, the objective is to make the hole more easy to see and to provide a self-supporting liner that provides independent structural rigidity to the earthen walls of the upper portion of the golf hole. No such self-support is required in the liner application of Boyd or that of the Appellant’s invention. The walls of the golf cup are typically metal or hard plastic. These walls provide all the structural support needed to hold a liner in a rigid position, even if the liner was paper thin. Further, there is no need in the golf cup sleeve of the Appellant’s invention to provide for visibility of the golf hole. Accordingly, it is far from immediately apparent that the self-supporting and high visibility sleeve of Browne would

have applicability as a liner element in Boyd where the primary purpose of the liner is merely to line an already self-supporting structure. Interestingly, if the standard golf cup were to be positioned in an earthen golf hole so that its top edge was at the level of the grass, the very need for the Browne invention would be eliminated as no portion of the hole would have exposed earthen walls.

In addition, the Appellant notes that the Examiner has not produced any express teaching or motivation in the art to combine these products in any manner. The Examiner's position is that it is obvious to take the Boyd product and improve or fix it with a secondary reference that has at best a tenuous or tangential relation to the actual problem of the cup liner idea shown in Boyd. As noted above, the Examiner asserts that it would be obvious to modify Boyd to be seamless because then it would be easier to insert the Boyd liner. This assertion is unsupported by any evidence, reasoning, or logic. Such a "problem" is neither expressly nor implicitly recognized in the prior art.

To support an obviousness rejection, the prior art must suggest the desirability of the claimed invention. However, as already noted above and from the discussion in Boyd, it is clear that the Boyd liner is already relatively easy to insert. Boyd is used by the strip being "over-folded and placed in a hole cup where it will open out under its natural resilience to tightly engage the wall of the cup." (Page 2, lines 25-27). Appellant cannot find in that statement any suggestion that the liner is difficult to insert or that there is a need for an easier technique of mounting such a liner. Boyd teaches the common sense method for lining a cup. Making Boyd seamless would, if anything, make it harder to insert since then the cylinder would need to be made concave and inserted into the cup. Additionally and importantly, a seamless liner is more difficult to manufacture than a seamed one and harder to store and ship since it cannot be laid flat. Accordingly, when the Appellant's teaching is removed from the picture, there is simply no evidence or reasoning that can support the position that there would be any expectation of some advantage from modifying the Boyd reference to use a seamless golf cup liner design based on the seamless earthen wall support of Browne.

Again, another factor against combining the references in the manner suggested by the Examiner is that the references are directed to non-analogous problems. These are two different products solving two different problems. Boyd teaches a cup liner to line the inside of a golf cup. Browne teaches an above-the-cup collar that keeps dirt from eroding around the top of a hole and provides a visual aid. These are distinct problems requiring different functionality from a product. For example, as noted above, Browne states that his collar also acts as a moisture barrier to help prevent the dirt crumbling. Thus it appears the reason Browne uses a cylinder instead of a strip is to prevent dirt and water vapor from escaping through the seam so as to provide a moisture barrier. However, these needs are not required in the Boyd reference in which the liner is within the cup and thus does not need to prevent crumbling dirt nor act as a moisture barrier. Accordingly, one skilled in the art would not have any rationale for combining the teachings.

Appellant also submits that the references are improperly combined by the Examiner since the combination as suggested by the Examiner would render the Boyd reference unsatisfactory for its intended purpose. For example, as discussed on lines 34-35 on page 2 of Boyd, “[t]he liner is of course reversible.” This allows the Boyd liner to be re-used with either of its surfaces facing outwards. However, if the Boyd liner were modified to be a seamless cylinder it would not be reversible and thus not work in its intended manner. A seamless cylinder is not able to be reversed to use the other surface. Thus, Boyd teaches away from the suggested modification. As noted above, if a proposed modification would render the prior art invention being modified unsatisfactory for its intended purpose, then there is no suggestion or motivation to make the proposed modification.

Moreover, even if combined, the teachings of the two references would not lead to the present invention. One skilled in the art looking at these two references would combine them to try to solve the problems each is directed to by making an elongated sheet that would be folded into a golf cup like the Boyd reference yet also reach to the top of the hole to block the dirt as taught by the Browne reference. Thus, if the teachings of Boyd and Browne were combined, the result would presumably be either a reversible strip that protects the inside of the cup and the dirt

area above the cup or a strip-type collar for above the cup. Neither of these ideas would provide the liner of the present invention.

Applicant notes that cup liners like the Boyd reference have an inherent problem that is solved by the present invention. The actual problem with the Boyd liner is that it allows grit and sand to get behind the liner through the seam of the liner. This flaw unseats the liner and makes the liner unusable. Also, a golfer's ball may strike an unseated liner and be unfairly rejected or accepted by a hole, or a golfer may catch their hand on the seam while reaching into the cup, or the flag may snag along the seam. There is no express teaching in the art of a way to solve such a problem nor is there even any acknowledgment or recognition in the art that it even is a problem. The present invention provides a solution to this problem. The present invention includes a seamless cup liner that can be inserted and removed from the golf cup, while preventing anything from getting behind the liner. As noted, no prior art references discuss any problem with sand and grit getting behind the Boyd liner, thus there is no motivation for modifying Boyd.

Accordingly, the present invention has taken a failed idea and made it an important and appreciated commercial success. (See affidavits filed with response filed 12/10/2002). It is a major achievement in any industry to achieve commercial success with an invention, and in this case provides important secondary indicia of patentability that should not be displaced by the circumstantial and tangential case for obviousness advanced by the Examiner. Further, the Applicant submits that, even if a weak *prima facie* rejection is present (which it does not admit to), it is overcome by the evidence of commercial success of the present invention. This commercial success should, in all fairness to the inventor and with due regard to the well established case law, be given the deference it deserves.

Each of the independent claims recites subject matter to provide for a liner that will not fail because dirt gets through a seam. For instance, claim 1 recites a golf cup apparatus including a cup sleeve disposed within the golf cup, the sleeve comprising "a one-piece, seamless cylinder having an open circular top end and an open circular bottom end and the cup sleeve abutting the interior surface of the golf cup without interfering with a golf ball dropping within the golf cup."

Claim 20 recites a golf cup apparatus including a cup sleeve disposed within the metal golf cup, “the sleeve comprising a one-piece, seamless plastic cylinder” defined in outer surface by an outer surface; the plastic cylinder disposed within the metal cup such that the outer surface of the plastic cylinder rests against the interior surface of the metal golf cup in an interference fit therebetween and a top edge surface of the sleeve abuts a bottom surface of the annular lip.

Claim 22 recites a golf cup sleeve comprising a cylindrical sleeve having an outer diameter dimensioned to fit against an inner surface of a golf cup and an inner diameter dimensioned so as not to interfere with a golf ball dropping within the golf cup, “the cylindrical sleeve having a one-piece, seamless form wherein the cylindrical sleeve presents a substantially smooth inner surface when the cylindrical sleeve is mounted within the golf cup.”

Claim 25 recites a golf cup apparatus including a golf cup sleeve adapted to fit within the golf cup sleeve mounting area without interfering with a golf ball dropping within the golf cup, “wherein the golf cup sleeve includes an unbroken cylindrical sleeve having an outer diameter dimensioned to fit against the inner surface of the golf cup.”

Claim 29 recites a method including placing a one-piece, seamless cylindrical golf cup sleeve into a golf cup; and releasing the golf cup sleeve so that an outer surface of the golf cup sleeve is forced against an inner surface of the golf cup and an inner surface of the golf cup sleeve does not interfere with a golf ball dropping within the golf cup.

As discussed above, no rational, logical combination of the Boyd and Browne references would include such subject matter.

Dependent claims 3, 13, 23, 26, 30, and independent claim 20 were rejected as being unpatentable over Boyd in view of Browne, and further in view of Hageman.

Each of claims 3, 9, 11, 12, 13, 23, 26, 27, and 30 depend from and further define patentable independent claims 1, 22, 25, and 29, and as such are believed allowable for the reasons set forth in support of their base claims. Appellant believes the reasons set forth above are not affected by the Hageman reference which discusses a cup liner which is printed to allow for advertisements. (See Abstract and Figure 2 of Hageman). Hageman further teaches away from the seamless cylinder of parent claim 1 since Hageman’s recited purpose is to provide

advertising on the liner and there is no discussion or enablement for printing inside a seamless cylinder. Hageman discusses that the flat strip “orientation provides for maximum ease of printing or painting of the advertising message, minimum requirements of storage space for the replacement inserts, and maximum ease of shipping.” (Col. 4, lines 5-8). In use, as with the Boyd liner, Hageman’s insert leaves a seam along the edge of the insert when the flat sheet is inserted into the cup. As discussed above, such a design can result in the insert becoming unseated, torn, or damaged because of sand or grit getting behind the liner through the seam. Also, golfer’s may catch their hands on the seam while reaching into the cup, or the flag may snag along the seam. The seam is also an area which can peel away and collect dirt. In contrast, the present claim recites a sleeve comprising a one-piece, seamless cylinder. This results in a relatively smooth interior surface for the golf cup, which helps solve the problems of the Hageman insert.

The Examiner rejected dependent claims 8, 24, and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Crocker in view of Browne. These claims depend from independent claims 1, 22, and 25 and as such are believed allowable for the reasons set forth in support of their base claims.

Crocker discusses a device to prevent the caving in of dirt from around the top of the golf hole and to provide better visibility of the hole (Crocker page 1, lines 65-85). To provide those objects, Crocker discusses a cylindrically formed sheet of paper which is mounted in the hole and extends up to or slightly below the level of the ground around the hole. Crocker leaves a seam along an edge and therefore has the same inherent flaws as the Hageman and Boyd devices discussed above. The Examiner asserts that “[i]n view of Browne the use of a one-piece seamless design . . . would have been obvious to the ordinarily skilled artisan wishing to make Boyd’s [sic] device easier to insert in the hole.” (Page 3 of March 5, 2003 Office Action). Here, the two references are directed towards a similar purpose as each other. Namely, to provide visibility and stop the caving in of dirt around the top of the hole. However, the modification Browne suggests is not to provide a seamless cylinder which reaches all the way into the cup to line the cup, but a simple collar which fits on top of the cup. Again, there is no actual or logical

motivation which would lead one skilled in art to combine the teachings of these references to reach the present invention, and the above discussion regarding the Boyd and Browne combination is incorporated herein by reference.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, it is submitted that the Examiner's rejections of claims 1, 3, 8, 9, 11-13, 20, and 22-30 were erroneous. Reversal of those holdings is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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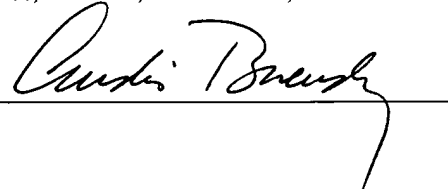
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Candis B. Buending

Name

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APPENDIX A

1. A golf cup apparatus comprising:
a golf cup comprising a cylinder extending from a top surface to a bottom surface, the golf cup including a wall extending between the top surface and the bottom surface, the cup wall defined by an interior surface and an exterior surface; and
a cup sleeve disposed within the golf cup, the sleeve comprising a one-piece, seamless cylinder having an open circular top end and an open circular bottom end and the cup sleeve abutting the interior surface of the golf cup without interfering with a golf ball dropping within the golf cup.
3. The golf cup apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the sleeve extends partially between the top surface and the bottom surface of the golf cup.
8. The golf cup apparatus as recited in claim 1, further comprising a notch disposed within the cup sleeve.
9. The golf cup apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the golf cup is formed of metal.
11. The golf cup apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the sleeve is coupled with the golf cup.
12. The golf cup apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the sleeve is formed of extruded material.
13. The golf cup apparatus as recited in claim 1, the golf cup further comprising a ridge adapted for retaining the sleeve therein.

20. A golf cup apparatus comprising:

a metal golf cup comprising a cylinder extending from a top surface to a bottom surface, the bottom surface including flag retention features therein, the metal golf cup defined by an interior surface and an exterior surface, the metal golf cup including sleeve retention features, the sleeve retention features including an annular lip disposed on the interior surface; and

a cup sleeve disposed within the metal golf cup, the sleeve comprising a one-piece, seamless plastic cylinder defined in outer surface by an outer surface; the plastic cylinder disposed within the metal cup such that the outer surface of the plastic cylinder rests against the interior surface of the metal golf cup in an interference fit therebetween and a top edge surface of the sleeve abuts a bottom surface of the annular lip.

22. A golf cup sleeve comprising:

a cylindrical sleeve having an outer diameter dimensioned to fit against an inner surface of a golf cup and an inner diameter dimensioned so as not to interfere with a golf ball dropping within the golf cup, the cylindrical sleeve having a one-piece, seamless form wherein the cylindrical sleeve presents a substantially smooth inner surface when the cylindrical sleeve is mounted within the golf cup.

23. The golf cup sleeve of claim 22, wherein the cylindrical sleeve includes a top edge adapted to be matingly fitted against a lip extending from an inner surface of the golf cup.

24. The golf cup sleeve of claim 22, wherein the cylindrical sleeve includes a notch in an upper edge of the sleeve for inserting a tool between the cylindrical sleeve and the golf cup when the cylindrical sleeve is mounted within the golf cup to allow the cylindrical sleeve to be removed from the golf cup.

25. A golf cup apparatus comprising:

a golf cup having an inner surface defining a golf cup sleeve mounting area; and
a golf cup sleeve adapted to fit within the golf cup sleeve mounting area without interfering with a golf ball dropping within the golf cup, wherein the golf cup sleeve includes an unbroken cylindrical sleeve having an outer diameter dimensioned to fit against the inner surface of the golf cup.

26. The golf cup apparatus of claim 25, wherein the golf cup includes a lip extending from an inner surface of the golf cup and wherein the cylindrical sleeve includes a top edge adapted to be matingly fitted against the lip

27. The golf cup apparatus of claim 25, wherein the cylindrical sleeve presents a substantially smooth inner surface when the cylindrical sleeve is mounted within the golf cup.

28. The golf cup apparatus of claim 25, wherein the cylindrical sleeve includes a notch in an upper edge of the sleeve for inserting an instrument between the cylindrical sleeve and the golf cup when the cylindrical sleeve is mounted within the golf cup.

29. A method of inserting a golf cup sleeve into a golf cup, the method comprising:
placing a one-piece, seamless cylindrical golf cup sleeve into a golf cup; and
releasing the golf cup sleeve so that an outer surface of the golf cup sleeve is forced against an inner surface of the golf cup and an inner surface of the golf cup sleeve does not interfere with a golf ball dropping within the golf cup.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein a top edge surface of the golf cup sleeve abuts a bottom surface of an annular ridge of the golf cup after the golf cup sleeve is inserted into the golf cup.